

AGENDA: February 11, 2003

7.2

CATEGORY: Unfinished Business

DEPT.: City Manager

TITLE: Potential Senior Advisory Committee

RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council review this report regarding the potential formation of a senior advisory committee but not make a decision until the City's financial ability to support an additional committee has been determined.

FISCAL IMPACT

None at this time. However, there may be a yet-to-be-determined fiscal impact to the City depending on if the City Council approves the creation of a senior advisory committee and how it is established within the City's organizational structure. If requested by the City Council, cost estimates for specific options can be developed.

BACKGROUND

As a result of the 1965 Older Americans Act (which made Federal funds available to state and local jurisdictions to help fund programs for the senior population), a City of Mountain View target area committee was established and given direction by the Committee on Aging of the Social Planning Council of Santa Clara County. The committee operated between March 1973 and June 1974 as a way to identify the needs for services among the elderly of the Mountain View area.

Upon completion of a report by the target area committee regarding the problems and needs of the aging and services available to them, the constitution and bylaws for the Mountain View Senior Coordinating Council were established in June 1974. The Mountain View Senior Coordinating Council was formally established in June 1974. The original purpose of the Senior Coordinating Council was to promote and coordinate activities, programs and organizations which would contribute to the general social welfare of persons 60 years of age or older in the Mountain View area.

The Mountain View Senior Coordinating Council continued to meet regularly until September 1998. Due to the lack of seniors willing to take on the leadership of the group, the Mountain View Senior Coordinating Council officially disbanded in March 1999 (Attachment 1). The group did not function as a formal advisory body to either the Parks and

Recreation Commission or the City Council but, rather, served as a means through which interested seniors could develop a collective message that could be delivered to individuals or organizations.

At the April 9, 2002 City Council meeting (Attachment 2), staff was asked to bring the idea of the formation of a senior advisory committee to the City Council for consideration. In June 2002, staff surveyed several local cities to see if they had an active senior advisory committee. Of the six cities surveyed, five use some form of appointed body. In most cases, the scope of the work of the groups was related to planning events, addressing issues specific to the senior population and/or the planning of a new facility. Only one city, Milpitas, appoints some members by recommendation of the mayor. The other four cities have a very informal application and interview process. The Milpitas advisory committee acts as an active advisory group to the city council whereas the Santa Clara advisory committee is a subcommittee of the parks and recreation committee. The three remaining city groups, Palo Alto, Sunnyvale and Cupertino, serve as advisory bodies to staff only. The sizes of the advisory committees vary from city to city, with 7 being the smallest and 26 the largest. All of the active advisory committees meet monthly. Both Milpitas and Santa Clara have funds budgeted for the senior advisory bodies and all five of the cities with an advisory committee have a city staff member who works directly with the advisory committee (Attachment 3).

At the September 10, 2002 City Council meeting (Attachment 4), Council suggested that staff examine options for the creation of a senior advisory committee, including possible designation of certain seats within the Human Relations Commission to represent senior interests. This option was explored with the Human Relations Commission and, in a memorandum dated December 17, 2002, the Human Relations Commission recommended that a "senior advisory committee separate and distinct from the Human Relations Commission be established" (Attachment 5). The Human Relations Commission (HRC) stated the following concerns: (1) interest in maintaining commitment to representing the needs and interests of all Mountain View residents; (2) inability to provide appropriate representation of senior citizens with current composition of the HRC; (3) dilution of HRC's efforts to address the human relations needs of the community; and (4) inadequate resources to fully address the needs of senior citizens.

ANALYSIS

Based on the information gathered regarding senior advisory committees in neighboring communities, the flexibility of existing committees and the availability of staff resources, staff suggests the following alternative organizational structures for a potential senior advisory committee:

- **Senior Advisory Task Force:** This task force would be comprised of senior citizens (definition to be defined) who are interested in serving as part of a team providing input on senior issues directly to the City Council. The task force could meet on a quarterly basis. This would require support from staff from the Community Services Department, who would be asked to attend the quarterly meetings and provide support as necessary. The members of the task force could be appointed by the Mayor, full Council or some other means established by the Council. A senior advisory task force would likely require the dedication of approximately 0.05 FTE of staff time. During the first year, staff could anticipate spending approximately 0.10 FTE of staff time on tasks related to the task force.
- **Subcommittee of the Parks and Recreation Commission:** The subcommittee would provide guidance to the City Council via the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC), advising the City Council on issues within their specific focus area. The subcommittee could be appointed by the PRC, Mayor, full Council or some other means established by the Council. This option would require the dedication of some staff time from the Community Services Department. A senior advisory subcommittee would likely require the dedication of approximately 0.05 FTE of staff time. During the first year, staff could anticipate spending approximately 0.10 FTE of staff time on tasks related to the senior advisory subcommittee.
- **Stand-Alone Advisory Committee:** A stand-alone advisory committee could act in an advisory capacity to staff in the Community Services Department or other City departments on matters pertaining to City services for senior citizens. In this option, the committee would not report directly to the City Council but, rather, would work with City staff to convey their priorities, concerns and recommendations. This group would consist of interested senior citizens who would be appointed by the City Council. This option would require the dedication of some staff time from the Community Services Department or other appropriate departments who would be asked to attend the committee meetings and provide support as necessary. A stand-alone senior advisory committee would likely require the dedication of approximately 0.10 FTE of staff time annually. During the first year, staff could anticipate spending approximately 0.20 FTE of staff time on tasks related to the committee. This alternative could require additional

staff time because it will be a distinct entity requiring direct staff support and would, potentially, have more meetings than other options.

- **Senior Advisory Committee/Commission:** This option would create a formal, stand-alone committee or commission that would act in an advisory capacity to the City Council on matters pertaining to senior citizens. It would consist of members who would be appointed by the City Council to serve four-year terms, a length of time consistent with the terms of members of other City committees and commissions.

The scope of the committee's responsibilities would need to be determined by the Council; however, potential functions the committee could be responsible for include: advise and provide input in the planning of programming for the senior residents of the City; promote and stimulate public interest therein and solicit cooperation of appropriate public and private agencies; and consider provisions of the annual budget for senior programming purposes during the preparation of the budget and make recommendations to the City Manager and the Council.

This option could require a substantial amount of staff time from members of the Community Services Department or other appropriate departments who would be asked to attend the committee meetings and provide support as necessary. It is estimated that between 0.25 FTE and 0.50 FTE of staff time would be required to support the committee during its first year of operation but the amount of time dedicated to the committee would ultimately depend on the duties and responsibilities of the committee. This alternative could require additional staff time because it will be a distinct entity requiring direct staff support and would, potentially, have more meetings than other options.

The Public Works Department has also indicated that a separate Senior Center advisory committee would be helpful to provide a formal outlet for seniors to discuss issues related to the proposed Senior Center.

Each option for a senior advisory committee would require some degree of staff commitment. With current staffing level concerns and the fiscal uncertainty of next fiscal year's budget, staff does not feel that it would be possible to guarantee committee staffing at this time.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

This report has presented the results of six Bay Area cities surveyed regarding senior advisory committees, five of which use some type of body to involve seniors. Information is provided regarding the Human Relations Commission in response to Council's request that

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the HRC consider the feasibility of including designated seats within the HRC for senior citizens. After a thorough examination of potential options for the creation of a senior advisory committee, staff has developed a list of possible formats for a senior advisory body. Each option for a senior advisory committee would require some degree of staff commitment. With current staffing level concerns and the fiscal uncertainty of next fiscal year's budget, staff suggests deferring a final decision on this issue until the impact of budget reductions is clarified.

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PUBLIC NOTICING—Agenda posting.

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- Attachments:
1. Public Noticing of Intent to Disband the Mountain View Senior Coordinating Council, 1999
 2. April 9, 2002 City Council Minutes Excerpt
 3. Matrix of Services in Other Cities
 4. September 10, 2002 Council Report
 5. Memorandum from the Human Relations Commission, December 2002